

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1446 without my signature.

I believe that one of the benefits of requiring the passage of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) has been to keep schools accountable to teaching all students with equal vigor. Requiring all students to meet the CAHSEE requirement for graduation provides incentive for schools to teach every student the skills needed to demonstrate basic competencies in order to earn a diploma. Therefore, I cannot sign this measure that would essentially provide a waiver for students with disabilities from passing the CAHSEE.

Instead, I am signing Assembly Bill 2040 (Nunez) to allow the state to consider whether there are other means for special education students to demonstrate that they have achieved the same academic competencies as would be measured by the CAHSEE. By doing so, I am asking the State Board of Education to examine the possibility whether a valid testing instrument can be developed for students with disabilities on a graduation-track, that has the same rigor and standard as the current CAHSEE. Ultimately, I will demand that the end result ensures that the state does not compromise the high level of expectations that we have for all our students and accountability for all our schools.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger